Facts on Fats & Dietary Fads

Revelation, Physiology, and the Forgotten Wisdom of Animal Fat

Jaouad Yakhlef

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ꕥ Introduction ꕥ

The human body is not an accident of chemistry. It is a creation fashioned with wisdom, balance, and purpose by Allāh. Every organ, every fluid, every tissue follows a design that reflects a deeper order in creation. When this order is respected, the body flourishes. When it is ignored, confusion and illness follow.

For centuries, the Muslim intellectual tradition understood this harmony. The scholars of *Tafsīr* (exegesis of the *Qurʾān)*, the physicians of classical medicine, and the scholars of *Ḥadīth* all recognized that the laws revealed by Allāh are not only spiritual guidance but also guidance for the preservation of life, health, and balance. What Allāh permitted is from the wholesome things, the *aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*, and what He prohibited is from the harmful and corrupting things, the *al-Khabāʾith*.

In this age, however, an extraordinary reversal has taken place. Foods that nourished human beings for millennia are suddenly condemned as dangerous, while laboratory-manufactured substitutes are promoted as healthy. Natural animal fats, once central to traditional diets across civilizations, are now widely rejected. In their place stand industrial oils, products of chemical processing and modern manufacturing.

This transformation did not occur in isolation. It coincided with a dramatic rise in chronic disease, metabolic disorders, and the gradual decline of human vitality. The question therefore becomes unavoidable: did humanity abandon something essential?

The reflections presented in this work are inspired by the words of the scholar Shaykh ʿAbd ar-Razzāq b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAbbād, who pointed to a profound contradiction of our time. Allāh once prohibited certain fats for the *Yahūd* as a punitive restriction because of their transgression, as mentioned in the *Qurʾān*.

Yet today, people voluntarily prohibit these same wholesome substances for themselves, while embracing artificial substitutes whose effects on human health remain deeply troubling.

Classical scholars such as ʿAllāmah ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir as-Saʿdī, Imām Ibn Kathīr, and Imām al-Baghawī explained that these prohibitions were not arbitrary dietary rules. They were a form of divine punishment, imposed because of injustice, rebellion, and obstruction of the path of Allāh. The foods themselves are inherently wholesome and beneficial.

This raises an intriguing question. If these substances were created beneficial, and their prohibition was a temporary punishment upon a specific people, what does it mean when the rest of humanity voluntarily abandons them?

Far from being a useless accumulation of tissue, it demonstrates that the body itself is structured around fat as a protective, stabilizing, and restorative substance. What modern dietary ideology rejects as dangerous is in fact be woven into the very architecture of human health.

To understand this topic is not merely a matter of diet. It is a matter of restoring alignment between Revelation (*Waḥy*), Creation (*Khalq*), and the natural constitution with which Allāh fashioned the human being.

When these three are brought back into harmony, the path toward health becomes clearer. And perhaps, along that path, we rediscover that what Allāh declared wholesome was never the problem.

For the benefit of the reader and in the interest of transparency, I have included a link in this e-book to the **original audio recording** of the words of **Shaykh ʿAbd ar-Razzāq b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAbbād** from which the initial discussion in this work is derived. Listening to the original statement allows the reader to appreciate the precise wording and context of the Shaykh's remarks: https://cutt.ly/fats

In addition, I have inserted a couple of **explanatory footnotes** throughout the text.

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Shaykh ʿAbd ar-Razzāq b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-ʿAbbād (paraphrased):

Animal fats (*Ash-Shuḥūm*) belong to the category of wholesome and pure substances (*aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*), and they are among the matters that bring immense benefit upon the human body.

If you wish to recognize this clearly, then observe the present condition of people when they abandoned these fats and ceased to benefit from them. Instead, they began using ultra processed oils (*az-Zuyūt al-Muṣannaʿah*) in their food. Consider how these have harmed their health (*Ṣiḥḥah*) and well-being (*ʿĀfiyah*).

Allāh prohibited these fats to the *Yahūd*, despite their being beneficial to the body. Yet today, people have prohibited for themselves that which benefits their bodies and have come to claim that it is harmful. They replaced it with ultra processed oils, and diseases (*Amrāḍ*) and various harms to their health followed as a consequence.

For this reason, some researchers argue that behind this development stand the *Yahūd*. Since Allāh prohibited animal fats (*ash-Shuḥūm*) for them, they allegedly disseminated widespread propaganda claiming that fats are harmful, thereby causing Muslims to refrain from consuming them. These were replaced with oils which, in reality, harm them and do not benefit them.

This is a matter that deserves careful reflection and examination.

As Allāh says:

"*Hence, for (great) wrongdoing done by the Yahūd, We made unlawful to them (certain) good (and wholesome) foods which had been lawful to them (such as the fat of cattle and sheep), and for their hindering from Allāh's path, many (people).* (***Sūrah an-Nisāʾ*** 4:160)

ʿAllāmah ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir as-Saʿdī in his *Tafsīr* (explanation) of the mentioned verse in *Sūrah an-Nisāʾ*:

Then Allāh {تَعَالَى} informs that He prohibited for the People of the Scripture (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) many of the wholesome things (*aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*) that had previously been lawful for them. This prohibition was a punitive prohibition (*Taḥrīm ʿUqūbah*), imposed as a consequence of their wrongdoing (*Ẓulm*), their transgression (*Iʿtidāʾ*), and their hindering people from the Path of Allāh (*Ṣadd ʿan Sabīlilāh*), preventing them from guidance (*Hudá*).

Likewise, because of their taking of usury (*Ribāʾ*), although they had been forbidden from it, they deprived those in need among those who transacted with them of justice (*ʿAdl*). Thus Allāh punished them with a recompense corresponding to the nature of their own actions, by preventing them from many of the wholesome things (*aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*) that

were inherently lawful and good.

As for the prohibition (*Taḥrīm*) imposed upon this *Ummah* (Muslim community), it is a prohibition of purification and refinement, intended to distance them from impure and harmful matters (*al-Khabāʾith*) that would cause them harm in their religion (*Dīn*) and their worldly life (*Dunyā*).

Imām Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar b. Kathīr in his *Tafsīr* (explanation) of the mentioned verse in *Sūrah an-Nisāʾ*:

He {تَعَالَى} informs, that because of the wrongdoing (*Ẓulm*) of the *Yahūd*, through the grave sins (*Dhūnūb ʿAẓīmah*) they committed, He prohibited for them wholesome things (*aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*) which He had previously made lawful for them.

As Ibn Abī Ḥātim reported, with his chain of transmission, that Ibn ʿAbbās recited: "*Wholesome things which had been made lawful for them.*"

This prohibition (*Taḥrīm*) may be understood in a decreed sense (*Qadarī*), meaning that Allāh allowed them to interpret their Scripture according to distorted exegesis (*Taʾwīl*), whereby they altered (*Taḥrīf*) and replaced (*Tabdīl*) matters that had been lawful for them, thus prohibiting them

upon themselves as a form of self-imposed severity, restriction, and extremism (*Tanaṭṭuʿ*).

It is also possible that the prohibition was legislative (*Sharʿī*), meaning that Allāh prohibited for them in the Torah (*Tawrāh*) certain matters that had been lawful for them prior to that. As Allāh says:

"*All food was lawful for the Children of Israel except what Israel made unlawful for himself before the Torah was revealed.*" (***Sūratu-l-Mā'idah*** 3:93)

It has already been explained that the intended meaning is that all categories of food (*Aṭʿimah*) were lawful for them before the revelation of the Torah, except what Israel (Yaʿqūb) prohibited for himself, namely the meat (*Luḥūm*) of camels and their milk.

Thereafter, Allāh prohibited many things for them in the Torah, as He states in *Sūrah al-Anʿām*:

"*And to those who were Yahūd We prohibited every animal with uncloven hoof, and of cattle and sheep We prohibited for them their fats (Shuḥūm), except what adheres to their backs or the entrails or what is mixed with bone. That was Our recompense for their transgression/rebellion (Baghy), and indeed We are truthful.*" (***Sūrah al-Anʿām*** 6:146)

That is, We prohibited these matters for them because they deserved such a punishment due to their transgression/rebellion (*Baghy*), tyranny (*Ṭughyān*), opposition to their Messenger (*Rasūl*), and their persistent

disagreement with him.

For this reason He says:

"*So for the wrongdoing (Ẓulm) of those who were Yahūd, We made unlawful for them wholesome things (aṭ-Ṭayyibāt) which had been lawful for them, and for their hindering many from the Path of Allāh.*" (***Sūrah an-Nisāʾ*** 4:160)

That is, they prevented people and prevented themselves from following the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*).

This trait (*Sajīyah*) has characterized them from ancient times until the present. For this reason, they were enemies of the Messengers (*Rusul*), they killed many of the Prophets (*Anbiyāʾ*), and they denied Jesus (ʿĪsá) and Moḥammad ﷺ.

It is important to point out that as-Saʿdī goes into more detail on this subject matter in his explanation of another verse (6:146):

However, the prohibition did not apply to **all fats (*Shuḥūm*)** of these animals. Rather, what was forbidden was the **fat of the tail (*Shaḥm al-Alyah*)** and the **omentum**[1] **(*ath-Tharb*)**. For this reason, the lawful fat was excluded from the prohibition when Allāh said:

"*Except what their backs carry, or the entrails.*"

Meaning the fat that is intermixed with the intestines. And He said:

"*Or what is mixed with bone.*"

And Imām Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd al-Baghawī said:

This «prohibition» refers to the internal fats (*Shuḥūm al-Jawf*), namely the omenta[2] (*ath-Thurūb*) and the fat surrounding the two kidneys (*Shaḥm al-Kulyatayn*).

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[1] **Omentum**: The type of fat that hangs down from the stomach and gently covers the intestines. Its job is to help protect the organs, keep them warm, and help the body fix small problems inside the belly.

[2] **Omenta**: the plural of omentum